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DEPARTMENT FOR SECRETARY RICE AND UNDER SECRETARY FOR
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KUNR](#) [UN](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR TAHIR-KHELI'S MEETINGS WITH GERMAN
OFFICIALS

Classified By: Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)
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[1](#)1. (C) (Summary) Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli visited Berlin and discussed UN reform with National Security Advisor Christoph Heusgen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs State Secretary Georg Boomgaarden, Director General for UN Affairs

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Hans-Joachim Daerr and other Ministry officials on March 6 and 7. She also met with members of the Parliamentary subcommittee on UN Affairs, held a press roundtable with members of the German press and spoke with opinion leaders in a number of outreach events. German interlocutors noted that they were dissatisfied with the draft proposal for a new Human Rights Council put forward by General Assembly President Eliasson, but said they reluctantly supported an EU consensus that it is the best that can be achieved now. They also raised the issue of UNSC expansion, and noted that, while expansion is not a top German priority, it is an issue of interest to Chancellor Merkel. They strongly supported UN management reform initiatives, but cautioned that eliminating mandates would be very difficult. They said the Peace Building Commission is particularly important to the Germans, and Germany would like to be present "as permanently as possible" on this commission.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador Tahir Kheli emphasized that it is important to get a significant improvement in the quality of the UN's Human Rights organ now that so much effort has gone into reforming it. She said it would be better to address the issue of Security Council expansion later this year after other UN reforms had been dealt with. She stressed that the U.S. does believe Security Council reform is important, but there are still many conflicting proposals for expansion and no signs yet that any can obtain broad support. Regarding management reform, she stressed that the U.S. focus is not simply on eliminating mandates to save money, but on using resources more efficiently and redirecting the UN budget to higher priority tasks. (End Summary)

NSA Heusgen

[1](#)3. (C) National Security Advisor Heusgen expressed interest in how the debate on the Human Rights Council could move forward. He agreed that the proposal of General Assembly President Eliasson for a new council had been watered down and had a number of weak points. He said trying to improve it was reasonable, but asked what should be done if efforts to improve the draft failed. Heusgen said Germany and the EU had concluded that the advantages of the current draft outweighed its disadvantages.

[1](#)4. (C) Ambassador Tahir-Kheli stressed that the U.S. has been strongly engaged over the past eighteen months on UN reform issues and has consistently highlighted U.S. priorities. Regarding the Human Rights Council, the U.S. made clear from the beginning that improving the quality of membership is critical. The U.S. did not ask for line by line negotiations at the last minute, she said, but is simply standing by the principle that objective requirements for membership, such as the support of two thirds of the General Assembly and absence of human rights-related sanctions, are necessary. She stressed that the EU and the U.S. should work together closely on this issue. She said some interlocutors had told her that some African countries were prepared to support the two thirds requirement for membership but backed away after getting a signal from the EU that the majority requirement was acceptable.

15. (C) She noted that UN management reform efforts are already underway and that a list of mandates for review might be available at the end of the month. She stressed that the U.S. focus is not simply on eliminating mandates to save money, but on using resources more efficiently and redirecting the UN budget to higher priority tasks. Chancellery Global Affairs Director Nikel, who sat in on the meeting, agreed that trying to eliminate mandates would be very important, but he stressed that the debate would become politicized.

16. (C) Nikel also raised the issue of UNSC expansion, and asked whether the U.S. had a position on the recent Japanese expansion proposal. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli said that, although the U.S. supports a permanent seat for Japan, it has not taken a position on the new Japanese proposal. She noted that there are still many conflicting proposals for expansion

and no signs yet that any can obtain broad support. Nikel said that, although UNSC expansion is not the top UN reform priority of the Germans, Chancellor Merkel does show interest in the topic. Nikel added that Merkel was involved in the decision to reintroduce the G-4 proposal this year.

17. (C) Nikel also asked Ambassador Tahir-Kheli for her views on the election of a new Secretary General. She said the U.S. is looking for a strong manager and is not tied to supporting a candidate from any particular region.

18. (C) National Security Advisor Heusgen noted as an aside that the current German government wants the EU to take more common positions in the UN to support the long term objective of strengthening the EU. In fact, Heusgen said he would like this to be one of the goals for Germany's EU presidency next year.

General Director Daerr

19. (C) The meeting with General Director Daerr of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused largely on management reform. He said the Germans had selected Karl-Theodor Paschke to be a Special Ambassador for UN Management Reform. According to Daerr, Paschke's long experience working on management issues in the UN would make him an excellent counterpart for U.S. and Japanese advisors working in similar functions. Daerr added that Foreign Minister Steinmeier is very familiar with UN reform issues because of his previous job in the Chancellery.

10. (C) Daerr said the new Ethics Office and Auditing Board have strong support in the General Assembly. The mandate reviews would encounter more difficulties because G-77 countries would resist eliminating many of the mandates. Mandate reviews, he said, will have to be done in phases and it may take a long time to get tangible results. Daerr said he recognizes the U.S. government is under congressional pressure to get quick results on UN reform. He said this pressure is useful up to a point, but at some point this time pressure might stir resentment in some UN members. Daerr said Western countries should stress that when the UN saves money by eliminating a mandate the money will be reinvested in a higher priority UN program.

11. (C) Ambassador Tahir-Kheli agreed that this would be a good approach. She said that in her consultations with other countries she had noted a widespread and deep desire for management reform and improved efficiency at the UN. Many interlocutors agreed with her that it did not make sense, for example, for an organization as large as the UN Department for Peace Keeping Operations, with a budget of more than 4 billion dollars, to have no outside oversight. She said that the Secretary General had begun making some management changes in January. She noted that reform is likely to lead to fewer jobs in New York and more jobs in the field, often in countries where living conditions are difficult. It will also require giving more administrative power to the Secretary General. Consequently, reform will require a

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change in the political culture at the UN.

Peace Building Commission

12. (C) Daerr said the Peace Building Commission is particularly important to the Germans, in part because of the big investments they have made in Afghanistan. He said Germany would like to be present "as permanently as possible" on this commission. Consequently, during times when they are not represented as one of the leading financial contributors they would like U.S. support in being elected through one of the other nominating mechanisms (such as being voted onto the commission by the General Assembly). Daerr said some key players should remain on the Peace Building Commission more or less permanently, since expertise is critical. He argued that the principle of rotation would be destructive for this

commission.

113. (C) Daerr said tha once the Peace Building Commission is up and running it should focus quickly on its initial tasks. He cautioned that the problems in the Congo or Sdan might be too large for the commission to tak on, and suggested that Haiti, Burundi or Liberi might be better as first tasks.

Security Council Expansion

114. (C) Daerr said that the Germans reintroduced the G-4 proposal for Security Council expansion this year because they believe it is the best proposal that has a reasonable chance of getting broad support in the General Assembly. He said the Germans will be interested in U.S. views on Japan's recent proposal for Security Council expansion which calls for 21 members. Daerr said the Japanese shaped their proposal to meet what they thought might be Washington's requirements on such issues as maximum expansion of the Council. According to Daerr, the Japanese told him they do not expect the U.S. to support this proposal, but they hope it will at least not encounter active resistance from Washington.

115. (C) Daerr argued that the Japanese proposal would get little support in the General Assembly. He said the proposal would have the best chance if it did not specify which of the six new seats it calls for is permanent and which is non-permanent. However, he said that if new permanent members are selected by secret ballot under such a proposal the Japanese would be unlikely to get enough support to qualify.

116. (C) Daerr said he does not think that any expansion to less than 24 members could obtain broad support in the General Assembly. The G-4, he said, raised the number to 25 in response to High Level Panel recommendations which were generous to Africa. The G-4 proposal offers Africa two permanent seats and 4 non-permanent seats. Consequently, the Germans have been surprised and frustrated with the African Union's unwillingness to support the G-4 proposal. African obstructionism plus the opposition of the U.S. and China were the chief reasons it was not accepted, Daerr claimed. He added that the Germans remain open to other proposals.

117. (C) Ambassador Tahir-Kheli said it would be best to deal with other UN reforms first and then address the question of Security Council expansion later this year, perhaps in July. She said the U.S. government decision on this issue would be made at the highest levels of the government. She stressed that the U.S. does believe that Security Council reform is important, and that the U.S. definitely is not in the camp of China, which opposes all Security Council expansion.

Human Rights Council

118. (C) At lunch, where Daerr was joined by the Office Director for UN Human Rights Affairs Peter Rothen, the conversation focused on the UN Human Rights Council. Daerr said the Germans' initial approach had been to improve the existing Human Rights Commission, but they decided to support SYG Annan when he called for an entirely new Human Rights Council. Daerr said he is worried that the new Council will be no better than the old Commission. In some points, such as in not restricting the Council to a ten week session, the draft proposal presented by General Assembly President Eliasson clearly is an improvement over the old Commission, Daerr said. But the Germans were not satisfied with the draft overall. In the end, however, they decided to join the EU consensus that it is the best that can be achieved now.

119. (C) Ambassador Tahir Kheli emphasized that it is important to get a significant improvement in the quality of the UN's human rights organ now that so much trouble and effort has gone into reforming it. She said the U.S. has consistently stressed since 2004 that membership qualifications for the Council are critical. The U.S. has supported a requirement that prospective members obtain the support of two thirds of the General Assembly and that objective grounds for disqualification, such as being under sanction for human rights abuses, be in place. These have been long-standing positions that have been clearly communicated to many interlocutors, she said, and they remain the only sticking points for the United States now. The U.S., she emphasized, is not calling for line-by-line negotiations of the draft.

120. (C) Daerr said that an additional difficulty with the Human Rights Council is that its membership would mirror the proportions of the General Assembly. The old Human Rights Commission, he said, despite all of its faults, had a membership that represented countries with Western-oriented

human rights practices in greater proportions than the General Assembly. According to his colleague Peter Rothen,

the old Commission on Human Rights had 27 members who came from groups that generally were more supportive of human rights (WEOG, GRULAG and Eastern Europe) and 26 from other groups. The new Council, he said, would have 21 from WEOG, GRULAG and Eastern Europe, but would still have 26 from other groups. In any case, Daerr and Rothen said that if negotiations continue and it is possible to improve the draft, the Germans would like to stay in close touch with the U.S.

State Secretary Boomgaarden

121. (C) At the end of her session at the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Tahir-Kheli met with State Secretary Georg Boomgaarden. Boomgaarden emphasized that, although the Germans had gone along with the EU consensus, they were not satisfied with the draft proposal on the Human Rights Council presented by GA president Eliasson. Boomgaarden said the Germans were concerned about who might become a member of this Council, and he repeated the point made by Daerr and Rothen about the relatively low representation of Western-oriented countries. Boomgaarden stressed the problems that regional solidarity had created for the Commission on Human Rights. Because of African solidarity, he said, it had been impossible to pass resolutions critical of Zimbabwe.

122. (C) Boomgaarden also briefly discussed the Peace Building Commission and solicited Ambassador Tahir-Kheli's views on possible first challenges for this Commission to take on. He and the Ambassador agreed that cases like Haiti, Burundi or Liberia might be possibilities. Boomgaarden emphasized that 25 percent of the German Foreign Ministry budget goes to the UN. Consequently, the Germans are deeply interested in using UN resources more efficiently, and are pleased that at least the start has been made of creating an ethics office. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli stressed that independent oversight is important, as is eliminating mandates that are no longer relevant. Boomgaarden said such management reforms are usually easiest to make while allocating money to new programs. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli emphasized that the U.S. focus is not on saving money, but on redirecting it to UN programs that address current problems.

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